

St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, Diocese of the West

17840 Sky Park Circle, Irvine CA 92614 (949) 851-8933

Church Office Hours: M-F, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

Website: www.st-mark-church.org

Archpriest Michael Laffoon, Priest Patrick Irish

Protodeacon George Moubayed, Dn. Nicholas Mamey, Sub Deacon Athanasius Fakhouri

Choir Director Barbara Scholl

Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Mark Ellis, Theresa Joubran,

Karim Youssef

Church Office Secretary: Lydia Wakileh

Teen Advisor: Fatin Fakhouri



MAY 31, 2020

FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

DURING THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Troparion of the Ascension in the Fourth Tone: Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy Disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit, having become confident of the blessing. Verily, Thou art the Son of God, and Deliverer of the world.

ENTRANCE HYMN

Save us, O Son of God who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

HYMNS AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

All: Troparion of the Resurrection in the Sixth Tone: When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb. And the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Troparion of the Ascension in the Fourth Tone (Repeated)

Troparion of the Holy Fathers in the Eight Tone: Thou, O Christ, art our God of exceeding praise Who didst establish our holy Fathers as luminous stars upon earth, and through them didst guide us unto the true Faith, O most merciful One, glory to Thee

Troparion to St. Mark in the Fourth Tone: From thy childhood the light of truth enlightened thee, O Mark, and thou didst love the labor of Christ the Savior. Wherefore thou didst follow Peter with zeal and didst serve Paul as a fellow laborer and didst enlighten the world with thy holy Gospel.

Kontakion of Pascha Tone 6: When Thou didst fulfill Thy dispensation for our sakes, uniting the terrestrials with the celestials, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, inseparable in space, but constant without separation, and crying unto Thy beloved: I am with you, and no one shall be against you.

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Prokeimenon (Daniel3:26-27) Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers. For you art just in all you have done.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (20:16-18, 28-36)

In those days, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for

the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had spoken thus, he neled down and prayed with them all.

Alleluia Verses (Psalm 49:1, 5) The God of gods, the Lord, has spoken and has called the earth. Gather his saints to him.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (17:1-13)

At that time, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee, since Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. And this is eternal life that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now, Father, glorify Thou Me in Thy own presence with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made. I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they know that everything that Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine; all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name, which Thou have given Me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

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OTHER CHANGES FOR SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION

Instead of "We have seen the true light...", we sing the Troparion of Ascension.

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Holy Oblations are offered today by Austin, Osama, Anees, Jamie & Juliana for their parents Anton & Kietie on their 60th wedding anniversary and for Angelina's 13th birthday, by Michael & Charlotte Khoury for Melissa and Zack on the occasion of her graduation and for the health and salvation of their family, and by Alexandra Chala for the soul of her godmother, Shamasy Najwa Moubayed.

Until further notice, both Coffee Hour and Church School are cancelled.

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After the exclamation of the Ektenia of Fervent Supplication, "For thou art a merciful God..." we add the following

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest:

O God Almighty, Lord of heaven and earth, and of all creation visible and invisible, in thine ineffable goodness, look down upon us, thy people gathered in thy Holy Name. Be our helper and defender in this day of affliction. Thou knowest our weakness. Thou hearest our cry in repentance and contrition of heart. O Lord who lovest mankind, deliver us from the impending threat of the Corona Virus. Send thine angel to watch over us and protect us. Grant health and recovery to those suffering from this virus. Guide the hands of physicians and preserve those who are healthy. Enable us to continue to serve our suffering brothers and sisters in peace that together we may glorify thy most honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

We then continue with the Second Litany of the Faithful.

Please remember in your prayers: Eleanor Wackeen, Jamal El-Sayegh, Francois & Maureen Maatouk, Tarek Fakhouri, Adele Bahbah, Paul Qaqundah, Theresa Joubran, and the suffering people of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Palestine, Venezuela, Ukraine, and all people afflicted by violence and disease, especially those affected by the Coronavirus.

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Good Samaritan Fund

Several years ago, St. Mark Church established a fund for assisting those in need, both within our parish and in the general community. From time to time we ask for

contributions to the Good Samaritan Fund, and this is one of those times. If you are in need of assistance or you are aware of someone in our parish that needs financial assistance, please speak with Fr. Michael.

Today

Please remember that even in the midst of this difficult period, the expenses of the parish continue. It is important that we send in our donations and pledges via U.S. mail, or if you prefer to pay by credit card call the Church Office to set this up. We are working to keep our expenditures as low as possible until things return to a more normal state.

This Week

Wednesday June 3, 6:00 p.m. Vespers

Regarding Church Attendance

On May 25, Gov. Newsome announced relaxed guidelines for religious gatherings in the State of California. The guidelines specify that churches, synagogues, mosques, etc. may now gather for services with a limit of 25% of capacity, or 100 attendees whichever is less.

Based on the maximum number of people allowed in our sanctuary (324), we are now allowed up to 81 attendees.

This will be a partial re-opening of our services. This requires some kind of system to allow a larger number of people to start coming to holy services without going over our limit and allowing everyone a chance to attend, even though it can't all be on the same day.

Accordingly I have divided our parish into 4 groups. For the next four Sundays one of these groups will be designated for attendance. I have tried, using the parish roster to make the sizes of these group more or less the same in size. Here is the schedule:

Sunday May 31: Last names A-D

Sunday June 7: Last names E-J

Sunday June 14: Last names K-Q

Sunday June 21: Last names R-Z

Every Sunday our Choir Director Barbara Scholl will ask a rotating small number of singers to also be present.

Holy Services will continue being live-streamed at <https://livestream.com/accounts/13863088/events/9076624?t=1586211820473>

We are implementing this partial re-opening using the guidelines from the State of California and from our Metropolitan. These are summarized below. Please read these guidelines carefully and follow them.

We will continue to live stream all services until we all can be together again. For those attending services, please work diligently to be at church on time. It is a gift to be able to come together again so let's start with "Blessed is the Kingdom" at 10 AM. You are also welcome to join us for Matins at 8:45 AM.

There is a great deal of joy in bringing our community back together again even though we are still doing this slowly.

All attendees must practice self-distancing, excepting those who live in the same household (no less than 6 ft. separation). Every other row of seats will be "blocked off" to facilitate distancing. Ushers may ask you to move if necessary to maintain prudent distancing.

The wearing of protective masks is highly recommended (young children excepted). Choir members will not be wearing masks, but will practice rigorous distancing).

If you have symptoms of illness, please stay home. These symptoms include:

Fever or chills

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Fatigue

Muscle or body aches

Headache

New loss of taste or smell

Sore throat

Congestion or runny nose

Nausea or vomiting
Diarrhea

People with serious underlying conditions and the elderly should stay home. These people can schedule Confession and/or reception of Holy Communion by appointment. If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should not participate in holy services for 14 days.

The “stay at home” order went into effect in mid-Lent. Holy Confession therefore, is overdue for many. These can be scheduled with Fr. Michael on Wednesday or Saturday after Vespers. For the time being Confessions will not be heard on Sunday mornings. The weekly Vespers service are open to all (up to our 81 person limit).

Points of contact in the Narthex and Church will be cleaned/disinfected after each service. Hand sanitizer will be available in the Narthex (please help us by bringing your own, if possible).

Please use sanitizer or soap and water to wash your hands upon entering the church building.

Clergy will cleanse their hands periodically during holy services.

Regarding the distribution of Holy Communion, I quote from the directive of our Metropolitan, “we will continue to offer Communion according to our Tradition, but all should allow the priest to pour the Body and Blood by opening their mouths wide and not closing their lips on the spoon. If the spoon does touch the mouth of the communicant, it should be wiped on the kalima [communion cloth].”

When lining up for Holy Communion, please maintain 6 ft. distancing

Antidoron [holy bread] will be handed out by the priest, or an altar server wearing a plastic glove.

Collection trays will not be passed as usual. Instead one tray in the Narthex will be designated for collections.

The latest medical evidence tells us that COVID-19 is mainly spread via “respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These

droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).” (CDC website).

Gathering to celebrate the Lord’s Day is essential to Christian life. At the same time the last thing we want to see happen is for our gatherings to enable any serious illness. This is why the practices listed above are necessary.

Please continue to pray that our decisions and actions in the process of re-opening our church (and indeed our society) are guided by God’s wisdom. No plan is perfect so I apologize for any inconveniences ours may cause. If you have questions, please contact me via email (frmlaffoon@gmail.com) or call the Church Office (949-851-8933)